



CSD *News Release*

January 29, 2002

CONSUMER SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS IMPLEMENTED MEASURES TO HELP MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TAXICAB DRIVERS

The Miami-Dade County Consumer Services Department (CSD) has in recent months implemented several measures to help taxicab drivers overcome the economic difficulties resulting from the downturn in ridership, which followed the terrorist attacks on September 11, last year.

The main concern expressed by drivers at that time was for a lowering of lease rates paid to permit holders and passenger service companies. Although the Department has no control over the lease rates, which are the subject of private contracts, the CSD promoted discussions between the parties, which resulted in permit holders and passenger service companies agreeing to substantially reduce rates over a period ending January 1st of this year.

To give the Department the ability to have a more long-term effect on lease rates, the County proposed legislation, now being sponsored in Tallahassee by State Senator Kendrick Meek and Rep. Phillip Brutus, which, if passed, would give the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners control over the rates the taxicab drivers are charged for their leases.

In addition to those initiatives, the CSD waived re-inspections fees for taxicabs until December 2001, and gave a six-month extension to drivers whose vehicles would have had to go out of service last December due to vehicle age requirements prescribed by County law.

In direct response to another of the drivers' concerns, the Board of County Commissioners passed legislation allowing the drivers to pay for their leases in monetary instruments other than cash and dictating that they be provided with more detailed receipts when they make payments.

CSD has kept the industry informed of our efforts.

The Consumer Services Department has always acknowledged the critical role taxicab drivers play in Miami-Dade County's public transportation system and in particular their importance to the critical tourism sector.

CSD's Director, Sheila Rushton publicly acknowledged this important role as recently as last December when she spoke at a ceremony to honor exemplary Miami-Dade County taxicab drivers.

To the extent that the law empowers us, the Department stands ready to assist the drivers.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Patrick Smikle, Public Information Officer, (305) 375-5745; smikle@miamidade.gov

**Joe Mora; Director, Passenger Transportation Regulatory Division;
(305) 375-4578/2460; jm2@miamidade.gov**

Cathy Grimes Peel, CSD Deputy Director, (305) 375-4666 cpeel@miamidade.gov

The Miami Dade Consumer Services Department is an agency of Miami-Dade County government that protects consumers through complaint mediation, business regulation, and consumer education. The Department operates the Consumer Hotline (305) 375-3677, a central telephone number for consumer complaints and information.